

history of clarkson

30 Years Of Broadcasting With

by Chuck Barker

The year, 1948. A new radio station goes into operation as a joint venture between Potsdam State Teacher's College and Clarkson College of Technology to serve both colleges. The name indicated the cooperation: WNTC—Northern Twin Colleges.

The station operated a 100 watt transmitter on the roof of Snell Hall (then owned by State). The studio was in Snell 350 with the tech and conference rooms on the second floor. The station broadcasted on

carrier current at 640 KHz on the AM band.

In the beginning, WNTC played whatever types of music that it acquired. (Supposedly unwanted disks were discarded by winging them out the window across the house tops.) In the period from 1962-64, its format changed to rock 'n roll. By 1968, its format settled into "HOT 100" interspersed with progressive music. Also in 1968, WNTC became the first station in Potsdam to broadcast 24 hours a day.

In 1961, some Clarkson students decided to form a rival station featuring easy listening and classical music—WCCT AM and FM. In the period between 1961 and '62, the rivalry became so intense between the two stations that the issue went before the Student Council. At the time, WCCT was not recognized by the college and wanted to gain that recognition so they could receive funding. Eventually, a compromise was reached and the Inter-College Radio Network (ICRN) was formed. In 1964, WCCT became WTSC-AM and in 1970 went to FM stereo with a progressive format.

Through the years, WNTC's facilities improved and expanded. 1963 saw the first cartridge machine in the North Country, and it was built by WNTC technicians. In the fall of 1964, the station moved to its present location in the Chemistry Annex behind Old Main. 1964 also saw the first mass recruitment program and the first record survey—the "Swinging 64." WNTC made history again in 1971 when it became one of the first college stations to broadcast FM over a cable TV system. This year also marked the first replacement of WNTC's air board; the second replacement came in 1975 when the station went to FM stereo.

In April of 1968, WNTC gained national exposure in Billboard magazine. According to station manager Frank Stanwyck, this was a big boost for the station.

At about the same time, WNTC's biggest success story was taking place. Jon Wolfert was a Potsdam State student and staff member of WNTC and an expert at editing tape.

Jon acquired a summer job at station WALI in Syracuse



Reach for the rock



- A Historical View

and liked it so much that he decided not to go back to school. That is, until the State offered to pay his tuition and supply a splicing block if he did come back. He is now president and founder of Jam Productions in Dallas, Texas, and his company produces jingles for some of the largest stations in the U.S.

WNTC is now in the process of improving the station in many ways. The staff is upgrading the quality and quantity of service to the Potsdam State

campus. By next fall, WNTC will have production facilities exceeding WPDM and most other North Country stations, according to station manager Stanwyck. Program director Jim Aksel has been working out a tight format for the station. "More music and less talk" is to be the rule.

The reasoning behind the tight format is to train DJ's for work in professional stations. Providing a training ground for DJ's has always been one of

WNTC's objectives.

Future features include: feature artist album give-aways; Roxy tickets, Sergi Pizza, and Chalet Stein and Wine Lounge ticket giveaways; a long-term, multi-thousand dollar giveaway; and a contest involving the non-college community. Current special programming includes the nightly news at 8 pm and the Top 50 countdown Sunday at 5:30 pm.